



## Upper River Cleanup Decision Announced

### Lower Fox River Site Northeast Wisconsin

January 2003

#### Public Meeting

EPA and DNR will explain the cleanup plans selected for the Little Lake Butte des Morts and the Appleton to Little Rapids reaches of the Lower Fox River at a public meeting in the Appleton area. A notice will be sent soon with the details. For special needs or accommodations, please contact: Susan Pastor at (312) 353-1325, or toll free at (800) 621-8431 Ext. 31325.

#### Web Sites

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/lowerfox>

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/foxriver>

<http://www.fws.gov>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently signed a document called a record of decision. The document describes the final cleanup plan for the Little Lake Butte des Morts and the Appleton to Little Rapids sections, or reaches, of the Lower Fox River. A decision for the remainder of the river and bay will be made later this year.

### Lower Fox River PCB-Contaminated Sediment Deposits



*OU - This refers to an operable unit. An operable unit is a term used to describe a certain portion of a site based on the type of contamination, what is contaminated (soil, water, etc.), or a geographic location. For ease of management, the Lower Fox River site has been divided into five operable units based on geographic location and differing river conditions. This decision only covers operable units 1 and 2.*



*A hydraulic dredge, similar to this one, will be used to remove contaminated sediment in the Little Lake Butte des Morts reach of the Lower Fox River.*

## **Little Lake Butte des Morts Reach Cleanup (OU 1)**

The cleanup of this reach will involve:

- Dredging 784,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment.
- Squeezing the water from the sediment, treating the water and returning the treated water to the river.
- Taking the contaminated sediment to a landfill for permanent disposal.

By removing the contaminated sediment, EPA and DNR estimate this section of the river will have an average PCB level lower than the cleanup goal. Capping in limited areas would also be allowed if that proved to be less costly than dredging, or if dredging alone was not sufficient. These activities will reduce the risk to people and the environment.

Estimated Cost: \$66.2 million

## **Appleton to Little Rapids Reach Cleanup (OU 2)**

EPA has selected monitored natural recovery as the cleanup plan for the Appleton to Little Rapids reach. This

cleanup relies on natural processes to break down, dilute or bury the PCBs. However, it includes a program designed to monitor the levels of PCBs in sediment. EPA and DNR have chosen not to dredge the river in this reach because:

- PCBs in this reach were removed in 1998 and 1999 through the demonstration project at Deposit N.
- Active cleanup in this area would not significantly reduce risk.
- A decision on the PCB-contaminated sediment deposit farthest downstream in this section of the river will be made at a later time.

• Even without actively cleaning up this section of the river, the average level of PCBs in this reach is close to a protective level.

- The number of dams and locks create access concerns in this reach making dredging or capping difficult.
- The location of the bedrock may make removing all contaminated sediment difficult.



*Monitored natural recovery includes tracking the levels of PCBs in the sediment.*

This monitoring program should be sufficient because of minimal human health and ecological risk in the Appleton to Little Rapids reach.

Estimated Cost: \$9.9 million

### Objective of the Cleanup

The objective of this cleanup is to reduce the risks posed to people and the environment from the PCBs in the Lower Fox River sediment in operable units 1 and 2.

### The Next Step

EPA and DNR will begin discussions with the companies considered potentially responsible for the PCB contamination about doing the cleanup. Design and cleanup planning will also begin during these negotiations. The selected cleanup plan will be refined during the design phase. Once the designs are completed and approved by EPA and DNR, a contractor will be hired to begin the work. Although community input is always welcome, a formal comment period will not be held at this stage.



*Water separated from the sediment removed from the Little Lake Butte des Morts reach will pass through large sand and carbon filter tanks before being put back into the river.*

### Background

The site has been divided into five areas called operable units. (See map on Page 1.) They are:

Operable Unit 1 – Little Lake Butte des Morts

Operable Unit 2 – Appleton to Little Rapids

Operable Unit 3 – Little Rapids to DePere

Operable Unit 4 – DePere to Green Bay

Operable Unit 5 – Green Bay

This decision is different from the 2001 proposed cleanup plan because it only outlines the cleanup plan for Operable Units 1 and 2. EPA and DNR expect to issue a second record of decision in 2003 selecting the cleanup plans for Operable Units 3 through 5.

These decisions provide for a phased approach to the cleanup. Such approaches are often done to speed up a project while gaining experience to be used in future phases.

While this decision only covers two sections, the entire site includes approximately 39 miles of the Lower Fox River as well as Green Bay. The river portion of the site extends from the outlet at Lake Winnebago and continues downstream to the river mouth at Green Bay, Wis. The bay portion of the site includes all of Green Bay.



*Trucks loaded with the contaminated sediment removed from the Little Lake Butte des Morts reach will be covered and pressure washed before leaving for the landfill for disposal.*

## For More Information

For more information about the Lower Fox River cleanup, please contact:

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## Information Repositories and Administrative Records

Copies of documents related to the Fox River cleanup will be available in the reference sections of:

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 104 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5200

An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the cleanup plan was based, will be available at DNR Lower Fox River Basin Team, 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay; DNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 101 S. Webster St., Madison; and EPA Records Center, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

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